

PHARMACY TECHNICIAN TRAINING REQUIREMENT

(Guidance Document)

Introduction

Effective **January 1, 2014**, the Board will not renew the registration of a pharmacy technician who was **initially** registered after **January 1, 2013**, or who was *initially* registered *prior to that date* but did not maintain continuous registration, unless the individual has completed a pharmacy technician training program. There are several types of training programs that will be acceptable, including:

- a pharmacy technician training program offered by a board-approved, accredited vocational/technical institution or college;
- a pharmacy technician training program accredited by a board-approved, national organization that accredits pharmacy technician training programs;
- a pharmacy technician training program provided by a branch of the United States armed forces or Public Health Service;
- an employer-based program that includes a minimum of 240 hours in a one year period of both theoretical and practical instruction.

The Board is aware of only one national organization that accredits pharmacy technician training programs at this time: the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP). **Pharmacy technician training programs accredited by ASHP are automatically approved.**

Vocational/technical institutions and colleges

At its January 30, 2013 meeting, the Board adopted the following standards for approval of accredited vocational/technical institutions and colleges. **NOTE - the Board does not maintain a list of approved vocational/technical institutions and colleges. You may want to contact an institution or college that you are interested in to determine whether or not it meets the following criteria.** A vocational/technical institution or college will be considered board-approved for the purpose of providing pharmacy technician training if:

1. The pharmacy technician training program is accredited by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists; or
2. The following conditions are met:
 - a. the institution or college, or the pharmacy technician training program, is accredited by an accrediting agency that is recognized by the United States Department of Education;
 - b. students attending the institution or college are eligible to receive federal financial aid; and
 - c. the pharmacy technician training program includes an experiential component, with technicians being trained under the supervision of a pharmacist.

Accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education can be found at the following Web site:

http://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg5.html

If an institution or college is not accredited by one of the agencies listed on this Web site, it will not be approved by the Board.

Programs that are offered strictly online and that have no requirement for completing "hands on" training in a licensed pharmacy are not approved.

Employer-based programs

An employer-based program must include a minimum of 240 hours in a one year period of both theoretical and practical instruction. An employer that uses an internal training program *must* develop and regularly update a technician training manual that must be available for board inspection. The following standards for employer-based training programs were adopted by the Board at the June 20, 2012 meeting:

I. General considerations

- a. The content areas, listed in Section II, are required for all employer-based technician training programs.
- b. Minnesota Rules 6800.3850 contains the provision that "(n)otwithstanding the fact that a technician has completed a training program as specified in item B, it is the responsibility of the pharmacist-in-charge of a pharmacy to ensure that a technician receives adequate training in the tasks performed by technicians working at that pharmacy". Consequently, pharmacies may have to include additional content in their technician training program. For example, a pharmacy which utilizes technicians to assist in sterile compounding must include training that covers what technicians need to know about USP Chapter 797 standards. Similarly, a pharmacy that utilizes technicians to assist in non-sterile compounding must include training that covers what technicians need to know about

USP Chapter 795 standards. Other examples include, but are not limited to, the use of automated drug distribution systems and unit-dose packaging or prepackaging of drugs.

- c. These are the minimum standards that must be met in order for a technician training program to be considered Board approved. However, pharmacies may develop training programs that include additional content areas.

II. Minimum content areas required for all employer-based pharmacy technician training programs

a. Legal and ethical content

- i. Differences between the permissible duties, activities and roles of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, pharmacy interns and unregistered supportive personnel. Duties and activities which may not be performed by a pharmacy technician.
- ii. Requirements for a valid prescription drug order.
- iii. Requirements for a valid controlled substance prescription drug order.
- iv. Pharmacy technician registration and continuing education requirements.
- v. Activities that constitute unprofessional conduct or unethical behavior, including diversion of drugs.

- vi. Patient privacy. (May be completed as separate training).
- b. Pharmacy and medical terminology, abbreviations and symbols: sufficient to accurately complete data entry of prescription drug orders.
- c. Basic pharmaceutical calculations necessary for the preparation and dispensing of drug products.
- d. Basic information about commonly available drug dosage forms and routes of administration.
- e. Trade and generic names and the common indications for medications frequently dispensed by the pharmacy.
- f. Error prevention, reporting and follow-up. (May be completed as separate training).
- g. Dispensing processes:
 - i. Data entry
 - ii. Retrieval of medication
 - iii. Filling of containers/packaging of medications
 - iv. Affixing labels
 - v. Pharmacist certification requirement
- h. Basic knowledge of proper and safe handling, storage and disposal of drugs.

So far, the Board has approved two programs that can be used as *part of* an employer-based training program. These programs can only be used for the written or didactic portion of the training. A pharmacy that relies on one of these programs must also develop a formal experiential or “hands-on” training component. The details concerning all aspects of an employer-based training program **must** be specified in a **formal** technician training manual. The manual must list **specific** activities that the technicians will be doing as part of the training, list how many hours of training will be provided in each training area, list who will do the training (which for the most part should be a pharmacist), and describe how the technician will be assessed for competency in each area. A pharmacy that is using an employer-based training program must provide the technician with a document certifying that the training has been completed and must maintain records of which technicians have completed the training for at least two years after the training is complete. The three programs that have been approved are:

- *Pharmacy Technicians University*. This is an online program that has been developed by the publisher of *Pharmacists Letter*. The link to the program Web site is:

<http://pharmacytechniciansuniversity.therapeuticresearch.com/home.aspx?cs=&s=PTU&mobile=0>.
- *The National Pharmacy Technician Training Program (7th Edition)*. The Web site for this program is: <http://atipharma.com>.
- *Mosby’s Pharmacy Technician Principles and Practice*, by Teresa Hopper. Textbook, workbook and e-book available.

Employers will **not** be required to send any documents to the Board, such as certificates of completion of training programs – and neither will technicians. The Board's licensing system is being modified to track newly registered technicians. Upon their first renewal, such technicians will have to check a box certifying that they have completed the required training – with a warning that they will be subject to discipline if they have not completed the training. (Note that techs who register in the last half of the year will be allowed to renew their registration once without having completed training – but will have to complete the training before their second renewal). The Board will conduct an audit of technicians annually. Those individuals who have indicated during the renewal process that they completed a training program but who cannot prove it will be subject to disciplinary action. While the Board will not require employers to send in copies of training certificates, employers *may* be held accountable if they continue to employ a technician who has not met the training requirement. Consequently, employers would be well-advised to make sure that any technician that they hire has either met the training requirement or is exempt from it as a result of being continuously registered since before January 1, 2013. Additional information about these, and other, requirements related to pharmacy technicians can be found on the Board's Web Site.